

SOFTWARE AND TECHNOLOGY

## Amazon's "style assistant" offers guidance, product suggestions

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*The Amazon Echo Look doles out style advice. Image credit: Amazon*

By SARAH JONES

Online retail giant Amazon is looking to become a key source of fashion inspiration and advice through the nationwide roll out of its style-centric Echo Look device.

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Originally launched last year on an invite-only basis, the Echo Look uses machine learning and artificial intelligence to help consumers pick between outfits or add to their closets. The Echo Look has the potential to change the way consumers shop for fashion and interact with their wardrobes, opening doors for Amazon and its brand partners.

"Echo Look is a logical extension to integrate with Amazon's commerce platform," said Laura Sossong, consulting manager at **Boston Retail Partners**. "It's the perfect complementary offering to stimulate incremental sales and create cross-selling opportunities for Amazon's existing fashion pieces and Alexa technology."

Ms. Sossong is not affiliated with Amazon, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. **Amazon** was reached for comment.

### Look book

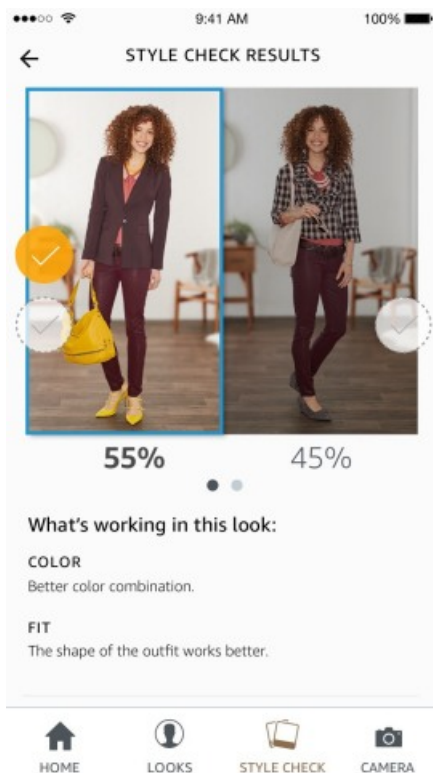
The Echo Look is a fashion-focused version of Amazon's voice assistant device. Equipped with a camera, the speaker allows consumers to take hands-free photos and videos of their outfits triggered by vocal commands.

Appealing to selfie culture, the Echo Look allows consumers to blur the background of their photos so that they and their outfits pop.



*Amazon Echo Look has a built-in light. Image courtesy of Amazon*

A companion application compiles these looks, allowing owners to track what they have worn. The Daily Look feature automatically organizes outfits by type of weather or season, but consumers can also manually group looks. For instance, a consumer could compile outfits she plans to wear on a vacation or bookmark pieces to donate. By using the Echo Look app, consumers can also consult an AI style assistant. After picking two different outfits and selecting Style Check, the app will return its decision on the better look.



*Amazon Echo Look Style Check. Image courtesy of Amazon*

The technology bases its choice on aspects such as color, fit and current trends. In addition to sharing its advice, the app will provide reasons for its pick.

Consumers can also poll the Echo Look community on their outfits, asking about the better choice for certain scenarios such as a job interview.

Adding a retail component to Echo Look's style advice, the app now feeds consumers product suggestions that will complement what they already have in their closets. These ideas are shoppable via Amazon.

*Introducing Echo Look. Love your look. Every day.*

A number of brands have already tapped into the marketing potential of the Echo Look.

For instance, as publishers work to reevaluate where media belongs in the digital landscape, Cond Nast publications *GQ* and *Vogue* began streamlining select content to Amazon's Echo Look.

In February, the Alexa-powered **Echo Look** started to feature magazine content from *GQ* and *Vogue*. Found on the home screen of the Echo mobile application, the magazines' content will refresh weekly and be curated by Amazon and Cond Nast ([see story](#)).

During New York Fashion Week this February, designer Prabal Gurung also used the Echo Look to snap backstage shots, which were turned into a look book.

"Fashion marketers will absolutely look to leverage Echo Look's Style Check function to boost sales and increase exposure to their brand offerings," Ms. Sossong said. "The social component of the device will allow sharing of look books, raising awareness and demand for labels and trending merchandise across social communities."

Fashion focus

Before Echo Look, other Amazon introductions were aimed at disrupting fashion retail.

Amazon continued to undercut the traditional bricks-and-mortar model with the introduction of a try-before-you-buy service.

Dubbed Prime Wardrobe, the service is currently in BETA testing and available only to Prime customers that the retailer has selected to pilot the program. During an era where traditional department stores are facing declining sales and consumer disinterest, Amazon has only upped the ante on its fashion division's happenings and service programs ([see story](#)).

Despite its interest in fashion, Amazon has struggled to get luxury fashion players on board.

While Amazon continues to grow, its penetration into the most affluent households has decreased in recent years, according to research from the Shullman Research Center.

Luxury brands continue to ostracize the retailer, worried that its counterfeit goods and tendency to discount would hurt the brand too much to justify the revenue increases. Nevertheless, affluent classes' growing affinity for the marketplace provides a provocative counterpoint arguing for its eventual integration into the luxury industry ([see story](#)).

"Playing upon successful components of social media, Echo will bring outside influence and inspiration to a consumer's closet," Boston Retail Partners' Ms. Sossong said. "It will promote social shopping by introducing shoppers to new style ideas and brands that inspire purchases."

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